DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 582 EC 132 865

AUTHOR Estus, Lorian: And Others
TITLE Teaching Young Children with Special Needs. A Program Description.
INSTITUTION Wheelock Coll., Boston, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 80
GRANT G007801528
NOTE 49p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Course Content: *Disabilities: *Preschool Education: Program Descriptions: *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Wheelock College MA

ABSTRACT

The booklet describes a graduate program offered at Wheelock College (MA) in teaching preschool disabled children. It is explained that the program allows inservice students to work toward their degree while receiving on the job supervision as teachers or aides. The cooperating teachers receive support and a course voucher from the college for their services. Four roles of teachers are identified and competencies listed for each: evaluator, strategist/planner, teacher, and communicator. Admission guidelines are given, coursework is listed, and the use of minigrants for independent study are discussed. Program aspects said to be unique include a year long internship, exploratory days (site visits) and a multidisciplinary orientation. Program dissemination activities are considered. (CL)

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This booklet describes the major features of the Wheelock College "Teaching Young Children With Special Needs" M. S. Ed. program, funded in part by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C. (G007801528).

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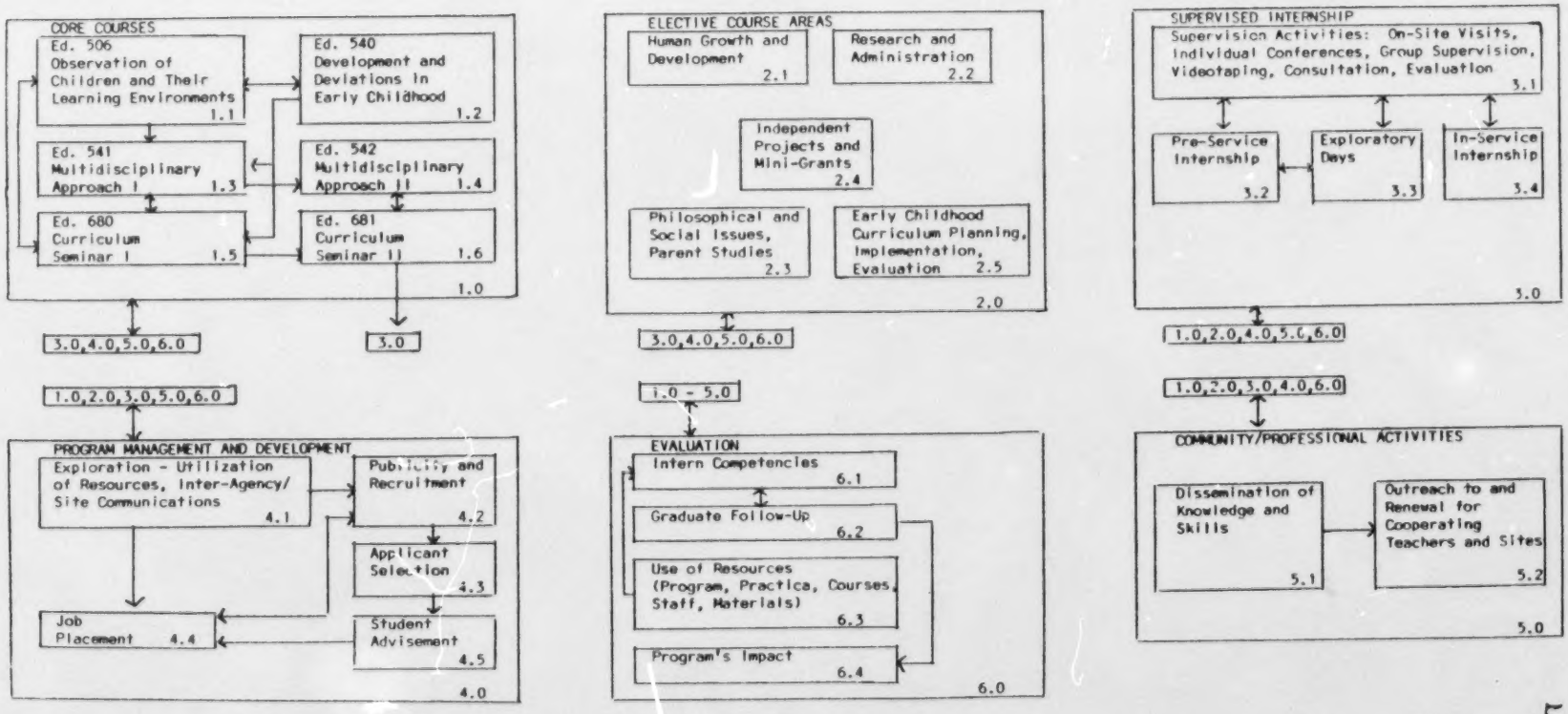
WHEELOCK COLLEGE GRADUATE SCHOOL

TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS MASTER'S PROGRAM DESIGN



OUR HISTORY ....

begins with Wheelock College itself. Founded in 1888 as a kindergarten teacher-training school at a time when kindergartens were innovations in America, the College has throughout its history focused on preparing professionals who contribute to the lives of young children, aged 0-9, and their families. In addition to its undergraduate degree programs, a Graduate School was established in 1954 which allows students to pursue a Master of Science in Education or a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study degree. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, there are programs designed to prepare teachers of preschool children with special needs. These programs are approved by the Massachusetts Bureau of Teacher Certification. In 1973, an Associate of Science degree program was instituted and in 1975 an Office of Continuing Education was also created. The College's programs are accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, the National Council for Accreditation of Colleges of Teacher Education, and the Interstate Certificate Compact.

Since the 1960's, the College has responded directly to both the local and the nationwide need for knowledgeable, skilled early childhood special educators. Several achievements in this area are especially noteworthy.

1966-1970

National Institute of Mental Health Training Grant, Teaching Young Emotionally Disturbed Children Master's Degree Program

1972

Carnegie Corporation and Boston Permanent Charity Fund's Wheelock College Community Needs Study identified special education as a top priority for personnel preparation

1972 - present

Implementation of undergraduate special education majors, Teaching Primary Grade Children With Moderate Special Needs and Teaching Young Children With Special Needs

1975

Graduate Council investigated ways of designing a Master's degree program in preschool special education

1976 - 1977

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped awarded a planning grant to Graduate School for training pre-service teachers of children ages 3-6 with moderate special needs

1977

Massachusetts Bureau of Teacher Certification approved Wheelock College's undergraduate and graduate programs in the area of "Teachers of Young Children with Special Needs." The College's programs were the first in the state to meet state standards in this new certification category

1977 - 1978

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped awarded program assistance grant to Graduate School for training pre- and in-service teachers of children ages 3-7 with moderate special needs

1977 - 1981

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped awarded regular education in-service grant to the College and its Center for Parenting Studies for training parents and professionals to work more effectively together

1977 - present

Title XX grants awarded to the College's Office of Continuing Education to offer courses for staff in mainstreamed day care centers and in early intervention teams

1978 - 1981

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped awarded program assistance grant to Graduate School for training pre- and in-service teachers of children ages 3-7 with moderate to severe special needs

1980 - 1983

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped awarded demonstration project grant to Wheelock College in conjunction with Boston Children's Hospital's Intensive Care Unit to provide follow-up services for parents of infants with special needs

1979

Massachusetts Early Childhood Project awards grant to conduct a summer in-service institute in Early Childhood Programming in Least Restrictive Environments

1980

College faculty approves new Master's degree program which will provide training to professionals from varied disciplines who work with infants and toddlers with special needs

OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM, TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, ADDRESSES THE NEEDS ....

of preschool children with a wide range of disabilities. Our program has continued to address this need by recruiting a small number of applicants already skilled as teachers of non-handicapped young children. We maintain a low intern-supervisor ratio to insure that interns have frequent and in-depth opportunities to review their progress and develop specific skills.

Intern - Supervisor Ratio

Year	Pre-service interns	In-service interns	Supervisors
1976-1977	5	0	½ F.T.E.
1977-1978	9	5	1¼ F.T.E.
1978-1979	11	2	1¼ F.T.E.
1979-1980	10	4	1¼ F.T.E.

OUR PROGRAM IS BASED ON SEVERAL ASSUMPTIONS ....

1. Learning is a holistic process, a complex interaction of thinking, feeling, and acting. As learners interact with their environments in an ongoing "dialogue," they act and reflect upon their experiences. To promote the integration of theory with practice, the internship serves as a reality-base where ideas are continuously translated into action and, conversely, where actions are analyzed.

2. Students are self-directed adults, capable of taking initiative within a structure and set of expectations. The student is not an object to be acted upon, but an active subject capable of transforming his or her environment. Internship and course projects are tailored to respond to interests defined by the student. Such individualization is possible with a small student/teacher ratio.

3. Students can use themselves as resources not only through the exercise of their skills, but also through enhancing their self-awareness. Students gain confidence in their ability to make decisions through solving real problems.

4. Students are capable of taking on increasing responsibility as interns within a context of supports from College and site personnel.

5. Students are capable of systematic self-evaluation.

6. Learning is a life-long process. Graduates are equipped with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively as teachers, yet they remain open to further professional growth. Competence is not a static outcome. Rather it is an attribute that graduates have which will thrive or dwindle depending in part upon the supports their work setting later provides and their own ability to develop the supports they need.

7. Early childhood special educators are capable of striking a balance among a variety of developmental perspectives and learning theories. They are able to continually evaluate all options available to them in providing the best learning environment for young children and their families.

OUR PURPOSE IS TO ....

offer a forty credit graduate program leading to an M.S.Ed. degree in early childhood special education. Our objectives are to: a) increase the supply and quality of preschool special education teachers; b) offer renewal for cooperating teachers and for program graduates through outreach activities; and c) contribute knowledge and skills to the field through dissemination of teacher-training materials and of student-initiated field and/or research projects. The program responds both to pre-service personnel needs within the United States and to in-service personnel needs within Massachusetts.

The program, on a full-time basis, encompasses two six-week summer sessions and a thirty-week academic year. A part-time option is available, especially for in-service students. The course of study consists of six required courses, four electives, and a continuous two semester internship in a preschool special needs setting serving children (ages two to seven years) with moderate to severe handicaps. Operated by public schools, collaboratives, mental health and public health agencies, and private organizations, settings represent self-contained as well as semi and fully-integrated classrooms. A full spectrum of handicapping conditions are addressed in these settings, although emotional and behavioral disorders, mental retardation, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, and learning disabilities predominate.

In addition to the degree program which allows in-service students to work towards their degree while receiving on-the-job supervision as teachers or teaching assistants, non-degree, short-term in-service training and supports are made available to cooperating teachers. These master teachers are provided with a course voucher for each semester that an intern is placed in their classroom. They are invited to participate in workshops, conferences, and institutes sponsored by the College. Interns are expected

to select course projects that can eventually serve as a contribution to the cooperating teacher's site (e.g., in-service presentations, parent toy lending libraries, annotated resource guides, instructional games). Whenever feasible, collaboration between the cooperating teacher, intern, and college supervisor is encouraged. To further reduce the cooperating teacher's sense of isolation from their counterparts and from the College, occasional discussion groups have been piloted on a rotating basis at the internship sites. Finally, activities such as grantsmanship workshops are designed to reach out not only to the cooperating teachers, but also to the program graduates and current students in order for all program participants to be able to learn from one another.

OUR PROGRAM IDENTIFIES FOUR ROLES ....

associated with the responsibilities of a head teacher of preschool children with special needs. These roles are often overlapping, yet they are also rooted in specific competencies that interns develop and demonstrate prior to graduation. These roles and competencies include:

Evaluator:

1. Observes and analyzes children's behavior
2. Selects helpful methods for assessing children
3. Identifies present functioning in all developmental areas
4. Uses information from assessments responsibly
5. Uses task analysis to evaluate curriculum
6. Assesses family needs to formulate realistic home-school program
7. Locates and evaluates additional resources for child, family, program and self
8. Evaluates program and own teaching effectiveness

Strategist/Planner:

1. Sets goals and behavioral objectives in relevant developmental areas
2. Determines next-step tasks in each developmental sequence
3. Describes child's learning style and recommends appropriate teaching methods
4. Consults and coordinates staff, specialists, parents, and CORE team members to develop and update child's Individualized Educational Plan
5. Schedules activities and support services to achieve individual and group goals in all developmental areas
6. Pre-plans curriculum on a daily/weekly basis to facilitate individual learning within total schedule
7. Anticipates and plans for smooth transitions
8. Plans for family involvement
9. Develops and maintains Individualized Educational Plans and records of children's progress

Teacher:

1. Defines classroom philosophy
2. Arranges environment (i.e., space, time, staff, peer groups, materials) to meet group and individual needs
3. Sets reasonable limits and follows through appropriately
4. Establishes positive classroom climate
5. Facilitates play opportunities
6. Presents planned lessons and activities
7. Demonstrates flexibility in classroom teaching
8. Maintains children's interest, attention, and motivation
9. Implements an individualized home-school plan

Communicator:

1. Establishes trusting relationships with children
2. Communicates on a level that can best be received and acted upon by the child
3. Sensitive to individual and group dynamics of children
4. Establishes trusting relationships with families
5. Functions as a valuable team member
6. Exchanges information with specialists and agencies
7. Presents information in a professional and articulate manner
8. Utilizes supervision and consultation

OUR PROGRAM EMPHASIZES ....

the preschool special needs teacher's skill in incorporating these roles day-to-day. For example, as an evaluator, the teacher must be knowledgeable about the limitations and advantages of norm and criterion-referenced testing instruments and techniques. Interpretation of assessments performed by an interdisciplinary staff also hinges on the teacher's understanding of diagnostic criteria and procedures. The teacher's ability to observe, record, and analyze interactions in varied contexts further enables her or him to make accurate judgments about the meaning of a child's behavior. Evaluation of the learning environment applies not only to the physical aspects of classrooms, homes, and neighborhoods, but also to the interpersonal dynamics of these settings. The teacher's evaluation expertise applies then to screening, assessment, individualized educational planning, daily record-keeping, mid- and end-of-year reports, referrals, and home plans. Finally, teachers continuously evaluate their own teaching effectiveness and their rapport with children, parents, and colleagues.

As an educational strategist, the teacher collects formal and informal evaluative data to facilitate instructional planning and decision-making. The teacher pools all assessment data and translates it into long and short term goals, behavioral and developmentally-sequenced objectives, methods and materials, and a means of evaluating child progress. When needed, the teacher makes arrangements for cooperation between other agencies and her school to implement the individualized educational plan.

Having mapped out an educational strategy, the teacher then creates an environment conducive to social, emotional, fine motor, gross motor, perceptual motor, cognitive, and language development. By skillfully

manipulating the variables of time, space, group size and composition, curriculum materials and activities, and cues and attention from herself, staff, parents, para-professionals, and the child's peers, the teacher can further individualize her instruction. The integration of psychodynamic, behavioral, developmental, and therapeutic approaches enriches the curriculum, especially when specialists share responsibility within the classroom. An orderly, predictable environment that can allow for spontaneity and that fosters respect for individual and group differences is also important.

Basic to the three preceding roles is the role of communicator. The teacher regularly exchanges ideas with adults and must do so clearly and confidently through speaking and writing. As a model, the teacher must establish norms for open, direct, relaxed communication among staff to: 1) ensure harmonious functioning; 2) create a stimulating language environment for children; and 3) demonstrate how adults, like children, have ways to make their feelings and needs known. Interdisciplinary team work and consultation depend largely upon the teacher's communication skills, as does the quality of parent involvement. Informing parents of their rights and resources, eliciting parental concerns, and collaborating with them involve sensitive listening and empathic, informed responses. With children, the teacher communicates verbally and non-verbally to support them in their relationships and in their steps toward independence. By verbalizing young children's concerns often expressed through their actions, the teacher increases the children's awareness of themselves and of others.

OUR PROGRAM SELECTS ....

a limited number of applicants. All applicants are jointly interviewed by the program's Coordinator and Graduate School's Dean of Admissions who also review their written materials, consisting of transcripts, letters of reference, application forms, including brief essays about professional goals and autobiographies, and a writing sample. Current interns in the program also critique the written materials and submit an admissions recommendation to the Dean of Admissions. The interview is semi-structured and addresses the following topics:

	Areas Reviewed for Admission	Admission Guidelines
I.	Academic Background	- strong undergraduate record (B average) with education, psychology, or child development majors favored. - prior coursework in normal child growth and development with B or better grade - literate writing sample and essays
II.	Experiential Background A. Teaching non-handicapped children	- 180 hours of supervised student-teaching or 1 full academic year employed as teacher with children ages 3-7
	B. Work with children with special needs	- demonstrated interest and commitment to working with children with special needs. Tutor, camp counselor, respite care worker, aide, are likely roles. Experience with ages 0-9 preferred.

(Areas Reviewed for Admission) (continued)

III. Professional Potential	- 3 letters of reference, at least 1 from supervisor or employer familiar with applicant's teaching performance - indications of applicant's success as a teacher, family worker, and multi-disciplinary team member through hypothetical and real situations discussed during interview and in letters or reference.
IV. Professional Goals and Commitment	- written statement focused on preschoolers and teaching as primary goals - letters of reference attest to applicant's stamina and maturity.

At the completion of each admissions interview, applicants may receive a copy of the program's newsletter, and, if requested, names and phone numbers of selected current interns and/or graduates teaching in the Boston vicinity.

ADMISSIONS FIGURES (1976-1980)

	Applications Received	Number of Applicants Offered Admission	Number of Applicants Accepting
1976-1977	12	8 (66%)	5 (62%)
1977-1978	32	18 (56%)	14 (77%)
1978-1979	36	26 (72%)	13 (50%)
1979-1980	40	18 (45%)	14 (77%)
TOTALS	120	70	46

OUR PROGRAM CONSISTS OF ....

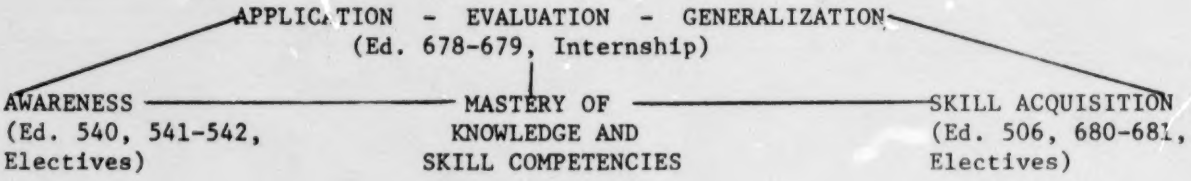
40 graduate credit hours scheduled over one academic year and two summers. The program consists of six core courses, four elective courses, and a continuous two-semester internship. Graduates receive an M.S.Ed. degree in early childhood special education and are eligible for Massachusetts certification as "Teachers of Young Children with Special Needs." Based upon the interaction of theory and practice, the program's sequence is illustrated below.

Credits	Courses	Semester
	(A) Core Courses	
3	Ed. 540 Development and Deviations in Early Childhood (0-9 yrs.)	Summer School I
3	Ed. 506 Observation of Young Children and Their Learning Environments	Summer School I
3	Ed. 541 Multidisciplinary Approach to Children with Special Needs I	Semester I
3	Ed. 542 Multidisciplinary Approach to Children with Special Needs II	Semester II
3	Ed. 680 Individualized Curriculum Planning for Children with Special Needs I	Semester I
3	Ed. 681 Individualized Curriculum Planning for Children with Special Needs II (Prerequisite Ed. 680)	Semester II
	(B) Internship in Special Education	
5	Ed. 678 Teaching Young Children with Special Needs	Semester I
5	Ed. 679 Teaching Young Children with Special Needs (Prerequisite Ed. 678)	Semester II
	(C) Electives	
12	Selected coursework possible in areas of Human Development, Early Childhood Curriculum, Philosophical and Social Issues, Parenting, Research, Administration	Semester I Semester II Summer School I Summer School II

40 total credits (18 core course credits, 12 elective course credits, 10 internship credits)

The interaction of three levels of learning contributes to the interns' mastery of competencies associated with each of the preschool special needs teacher's roles. Ed. 540, Ed.541-542, and electives primarily deal with increasing awareness of theory and knowledge. Ed. 506, Ed. 680-681, and electives encourage the acquisition of skills and the testing out of ideas through practice. Ed. 678-679, the internship, provides a real-world context for applying knowledge and skills, for evaluating methods, and for generalizing them to new situations.

Levels of Learning



REQUIRED COURSE WORK

Ed. 506 Observation of Children and Their Learning Environments

Involves students in a variety of actual and simulated observations of handicapped and non-handicapped children ages zero to fourteen years in camps, schools, and homes. Students record and analyze children's learning and coping styles, age and task-related behavior, the interactions of children with peers, adults, and materials, and the influence of the behavior setting on child behavior and vice versa.

Ed. 540 Development and Deviations in Early Childhood

Explores the range of mild to severe developmental deviations manifested between the ages of zero to nine years, e.g., developmental and learning delays or disabilities, emotional, behavioral, and communication disorders, sensory impairments, and physical handicaps. Theories regarding etiology are analyzed, recent research reviewed, and methods for identification and remediation discussed. The relationship between normal and abnormal development is stressed. Lectures, readings, films, panel presentations, and field visits are used.

Students become familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of several observational techniques. Also, they plan, conduct and critique a pilot observational study.

Ed. 541-542 A Multidisciplinary Approach to Children with Special Needs

Organized around a series of units or modules, each bridged by an integrative seminar. This year-long course, coordinated by the Program Coordinator, is designed to function in three ways: (1) as a forum for multidisciplinary interaction, (2) as a model of effective communication between disciplines, and (3) as a demystification of roles and procedures employed in related professions. The course aims to make students more intelligent consumers and producers of knowledge about young children with special needs. As students gain familiarity with the roles and contributions of persons from varied backgrounds, their ability to make sound instructional decisions and to perceive themselves as resourceful is maximized.

Legal, assessment, curricular, therapeutic, and consultative issues are dealt with in Ed. 541, while medical, public health, rehabilitation, parent involvement, and program evaluation issues appear in Ed. 542. College faculty, site staff, and guest speakers make presentations. Students prepare position papers, journal critiques, field-based, case-study analyses, and reports about service delivery and instructional approaches.

Ed. 680 Individualized Curriculum Planning for Young Children With Special Needs (I)

Designed to investigate and coordinate practical and theoretical issues in the education of young children with special needs. This objective is accomplished by focusing on both the development of preschoolers with handicaps, and on the art and craft of teaching them. Curriculum for young children with special needs is studied within the context of general theories of development and learning applicable to teaching all children during their preschool years. A primary goal of Ed. 680 is the integration of course-work and the internship (laboratory) experience. The order of presentation for Education 680 corresponds to the ongoing development and increase in students' role responsibilities as they progress through their year-long internships. Content will be divided into the following role areas: communicator, evaluator, strategist/planner, and teacher. Major topics explored include: analysis of physical environments, program models and teaching styles; informal and broad-based assessment skills; setting educational objectives, task analysis, planning and implementing curriculum (i.e., Core Evaluations and Individualized Educational Plans consistent with C766 and PL94-142); behavioral analysis and "management"; and facilitating play. Emphasis is placed upon the student's ability to understand these issues, to use the information as they teach, and to clearly articulate their knowledge in both spoken and written form. For Curriculum 570 interns only.

Ed. 681 Individualized Curriculum Planning for Young Children with Special Needs (II)

Education 681 is designed to investigate the in-depth assessment, development, and facilitation of motor, social/emotional, language and cognitive skills in

young children with special needs. While primary emphasis is placed on the growth and development of youngsters with special needs, course materials are studied within the context of general theories of development and learning applicable to teaching all preschoolers. Emphasis is placed on the students' abilities to understand the above skill areas, to use the information as they teach, and to clearly articulate their knowledge in both spoken and written form. Ed. 680 is a prerequisite for this course.

OUR MINI-GRANTS SUPPORT INDEPENDENT PROJECTS ....

As an incentive to students who have contributions to make to the field of early childhood special education, mini-grants (for students engaging in independent projects in lieu of one or two elective courses of 3 to 6 credits) are available on a competitive, merit basis. Mini-grants support projects that are inherently demonstrable, replicable, publishable, or product-oriented. By encouraging students to generate new ideas and to share them with others, the award is intended to (a) motivate original work of value to others, (b) legitimize students as resourceful professionals, (c) recognize significant contributions and (d) promote public awareness of early childhood special education. As student talents are recognized and encouraged, and as projects are undertaken and evaluated, students are directed toward appropriate dissemination activities.

Mini-grants completed in 1978-1979 were:

- Day Care for the Special Needs Child: An Examination of Available Services and Future Programming Possibilities
- A Summer Camp for Children with Emotional Disturbances
- Administration in Early Childhood Special Education: A Summer Recreation Program for Preschoolers with Multiple Handicaps
- Investigating, Creating, and Piloting Language Curriculum for Early Childhood Special Education
- Talking About Death with Special Needs Preschoolers: A Booklet and In-Service Workshop

Projects selected have been those that will have a positive impact on the field of early childhood special education. The nature of the project varies. Possibilities include a field study based on original research or an original application of research, an original theoretical paper, a workshop demonstration, a lecture presentation, a conference presentation, a clinical study, an original program design, the implementation of original materials, equipment, and techniques for use by young children with handicaps, their teachers or their parents, the development and piloting of assessment tools and procedures, or the planning, provision, and evaluation of an in-service session.

To apply for mini-grants, students submit proposals at least four weeks prior to the semester in which the project is to be undertaken. Proposals must address six dimensions specified in the program's mini-grant guidelines. The Program Coordinator and Dean of the Graduate School jointly evaluate proposals in terms of their goals and potential contributions to early childhood special education, their feasibility, and their completeness. Mini-grant guidelines also stipulate the duties of the faculty on-site advisor who works with the student and evaluates the student's achievement of the mini-grant's goals. Copies of mini-grant project summaries are retained by the program as a resource for future interns and site staff.

OUR ELECTIVES ENABLE INTERNS TO TAILOR COURSEWORK ....

to their own needs and interests.

Some examples of electives are:

- Language Acquisition
- The Meaning and Development of Play
- Emotional Disturbances in Young Children
- Learning Disorders in Young Children
- The Infant at Risk
- Teaching Young Children With Severe Special Needs
- Child Abuse
- Children Under Stress
- Stress and the Teacher
- Movement and Thinking
- Group Climate: Positive Approaches To Children's Behaviors
- Family Interaction
- Parent-Child-School Interface
- Working with Parents of Children with Special Needs
- The Consultation Process
- Administration in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children with Special Needs

Whereas some students cluster their elective choices around a theme, thereby creating a sub-specialty, others select electives as a way of gaining an introduction to an assortment of content areas.

OUR PROGRAM IS BUILT AROUND A YEAR-LONG INTERNSHIP ....

during which interns are expected to take on increasing responsibility as evaluators, educational strategists, diagnostic-prescriptive teachers, home liaisons, and communicators. Interns are expected to avail themselves of opportunities presented to them at their sites, while cooperating teachers are expected to gradually delegate a wide range of responsibilities to interns, based on the interns' readiness. Supervisors help interns and cooperating teachers evaluate how the interns' time is distributed and how challenged interns are by their roles at their sites.

Interns spend an average of 20 hours per week for 30 weeks in their internship, with about 15 hours devoted to direct teaching in the preschool classroom. Work with parents, staff meetings, consultations with specialists and agencies, and record-keeping absorb the rest of their internship time. The six required Exploratory Days per semester are also an integral part of the internship. The internship provides an extended time to learn, to explore, to experiment, to practice, and most important, to have the freedom to make mistakes and to try again. If interns are truly encouraged to be students of teaching, they will not only develop their own teaching style and philosophy, but they will also master skills needed as competent early childhood special educators.

There appears to be at least four "phases" inherent to the year-long internship which supervisors and cooperating teachers can help interns recognize and integrate. The first phase includes the interns' orientation to the dual roles of intern and student, their familiarization with the

sites' procedures, and their exploration of their internship responsibilities. Second, a period of "enlightenment" occurs in which interns may feel frustrated with themselves, the site and/or the program as they begin to learn about varied teaching approaches, service-delivery models, and legal mandates. Third, interns may re-assess their actual teaching experience relative to their ideas about the "ideal" teacher and begin to acknowledge the opportunities for growth at hand. This is often a productive time for interns who have clarified their goals and identified their needs and how to meet them. Fourth, interns prepare to, and eventually, terminate their internship. As relationships are ended, transitions are made, and their skills are formally evaluated, interns, on an emotional and intellectual level, take stock of all that they have accomplished.

OUR INTERNS' OWN WORDS ....

best communicate the advantages this model affords them:

....it would have been difficult for me to learn as much as I did in a succession of internship placements. I was able to see how the children changed over the year and also how those changes were reflected in changes in the classroom structure and atmosphere. The year-long internship made it possible for me to develop competencies in working with other staff members that made my involvement in CORE evaluations and inter-agency case conferences possible. Communication with interns working in very different sites lessened the disadvantage of being exposed to only one setting.

....the year-long internship gave me time to develop my skills and allowed me to make mistakes - to go through an evolution almost. I became more dissatisfied with my teaching at mid-year, because of my new awareness of what I needed to work on. The second half of the year gave me time to work on those aspects of my teaching which I thought were weak. A year-long internship also lets an intern know the children well enough to effectively evaluate them and participate in placement procedures. This is a unique opportunity for the student to follow through on the entire education process.

OUR INTERNS ARE ORIENTED TO THE PROGRAM ....

during the summer. In two orientation meetings, interns are introduced to one another and to the pool of possible internship sites. Over 40 preschool special needs classrooms are on this roster. The Coordinator, based on her and the supervisors' on-site evaluations of the site's appropriateness (e.g., population served, staff competencies, interdisciplinary team resources, parent involvement opportunities, proximity to Wheelock College, program philosophy and compatability with the program's objectives and needs), makes initial recommendations about which two sites a student will investigate as a placement. Students are given written guidelines to follow in investigating sites. With advisement from the Coordinator and the Director of the Placement Office, the students occasionally substitute recommended sites for alternatives. By the end of the Summer School, each intern has confirmed his/her site selection. Since placement choices vary from year to year, the following chart illustrates the range of typical placements utilized from year to year.

A Sample of Internship Sites
Serving Preschoolers With
Special Needs

Program	Sponsorship					Integration of Non-Handicapped Children	
	Private	Public School	Collaborative	Public Health	Mental Health	100% S. N.*	99%-51% S. N.*
Cambridge-Somerville Mental Health and Retardation Center Preschool Unit					x	x	
Watertown Public School Preschool Special Needs Program		x				x	
L. A. B. B. Early Childhood Program, Burlington			x				x
Baylies Beginning Center, Canton				x			x
League Preschool, Boston	x					x	

* S. N. refers to "special needs"

OUR PROGRAM ENCOURAGES DAYS SPENT IN EXPLORING ....

other programs and services for young children and their families. Each semester, pre-service interns are required to take one to two days each month as Exploratory Days when they can visit other sites ("structured" visits) or pursue program-related interests ("unstructured" visits); half the visits can be unstructured. Interns are required to consult with their supervisor and cooperating teacher about both the choice and timing of their Exploratory Day visits. Whenever approval can be secured by employers, in-service interns are also encouraged to conduct Exploratory Days.

For the structured visits, interns prepare a written mini-contract which is signed by the supervisor and filed. The Exploratory Day's objectives, activities and evaluation methods are noted; short summaries are typical products, which are added to the program's Exploratory Day Resource Folders. These folders help interns select places to visit and are of use to sites seeking information about area resources. By 1980, over 100 different Exploratory Day Resource Folders had been indexed.

Exploratory Days enable interns to learn about alternative curriculum materials, teaching practices and environmental designs. They also enable interns to meet other professionals and observe children with varied disabilities. By linking Exploratory Days to competencies interns want to gain, Exploratory Days are a means by which interns can broaden their knowledge base. As one intern said, "Exploratory Days are essential to the program. Without them, the interns' perspective on preschool special needs programs would remain insular."

OUR PROGRAM RELIES ON A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO SUPERVISION . . .

each intern is supervised by a college faculty member. The key to successful supervision is regular communication and collaboration among the intern, supervisor, and cooperating teacher. Supervisors have several responsibilities that necessitate cooperation from site staff.

1. Supervisors make bi- and tri-weekly site visits to observe the intern for an average of two hours. The intern, supervisor and cooperating teacher collectively review the scheduling of these visits and determine the most convenient time.

2. Supervisors confer for an hour with interns, on site, immediately after the observation period. Pre-scheduling of on-site visits and conferences is critical so that interns can discuss their performance and progress with their supervisor directly after they have been observed.

3. Supervisors meet with the cooperating teacher and intern at the beginning, middle and end of the academic year. Supervisors are interested in the cooperating teacher's observations, comments and suggestions for furthering the intern's development of competencies. Supervisors also function as a liaison between the college and sites and provide information as well as occasional consultation.

4. Supervisors oversee the formal evaluation of interns' competence. Periodically, rating scales, checklists and questionnaires are completed and reviewed by the intern, supervisor and cooperating teacher; parents with whom interns work are also invited to provide input at mid-year. Once each semester, interns are each videotaped for one-half to one-hour. Videotapes are for purposes of teacher-training. They are reviewed by the supervisor and intern and are then erased at the end of the internship. These multiple methods of evaluation help interns define their "next steps" and help supervisors and cooperating teachers individualize their training.

5. Supervisors co-teach the interns' Curriculum Seminar. Cooperating teachers can help interns identify projects that would benefit the site.

6. Supervisors ultimately give the intern "credit" or "no credit" for their internship. Interns must adequately demonstrate competencies listed on the Intern Rating Scale. Cooperating teachers participate in this final evaluation by sharing their ratings with both the intern and supervisor.

OUR PROGRAM RESPONDS TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF EACH INTERN ....

Interns have been impressed with the frequency, forms, and quality of supervision provided by the College faculty. Features of supervision that have been consistently lauded include an approach that:

- recognizes the needs, concerns, abilities and interests of adult learners and the ambivalence and stresses inherent to the intern's role;
- promotes collaboration among intern, supervisor, and cooperating teacher through frequent, straightforward communication, mutual problem-solving and shared evaluation, each of which is facilitated by a low intern-supervisor ratio;
- favors flexibility in terms of defining if, when, and how unstructured vs. structured on-site supervisory visits and conferences are planned;
- responds both to the interns' and supervisors' learning and teaching styles, respectively, and to the need for program accountability. Supervisors are provided with sufficient evidence of intern performance and interns receive feedback to maximize their attainment of the required competencies;
- provides both individual and group sessions to explore interns' concerns; and,
- experiments with oral, written, and videotape critiques.

OUR PROGRAM CAPITALIZES ON SEVERAL UNIQUE FEATURES ....

A Year-Long Internship

The duration and richness of this teacher-training model has been lauded by graduates who had ample opportunities to form meaningful relationships and to practice and sharpen their skills as they progressed towards competence.

Exploratory Days

The need to gain exposure to alternate instructional models and service-delivery approaches is accomplished through these site visits. These explorations required interns to develop skills in evaluating the pro's and con's of different methods, materials, and environments.

The Four Roles and Their Competencies

Interns relished the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the head teacher's role, including parent involvement and inter-agency collaboration. The evaluation tools such as the Matrix of Growth, Intern Rating Scale, and Criteria Sheets further assist interns in taking responsibility for self-evaluation and "self-improvement."

A Multidisciplinary Orientation

Field and course work both emphasize interns' roles as active team members. The interns' instructional decisions are continuously informed by their knowledge about the contributions and limitations of allied disciplines.

Commitment to Building a Preschool Special Needs Network

By remaining in communication with graduates, assessing sites' perceived needs, drawing upon the talents of graduates and site personnel in several program activities, and keeping information flowing, the program lays the groundwork for future joint ventures with alumnae and sites.

Promotion of Students' Professionalism

Students' projects have been designed to creatively solve problems faced at sites; students share their projects with sites as well as with each other. By donating copies of their work to the program and by preparing some of their materials for publication, students make original contributions to their profession. Projects have included: a language curriculum guide, a survey of summer programs, gross motor and body awareness activity file, survey of services for the hearing impaired, a children's book, tips for parent involvement, original songs for siblings with special needs, a climbing loft, award of a CETA grant for additional staff, implementation of a HandiRacket Summer Tennis Program for children with special needs, and creation of sensory motor toys and games. Students have been encouraged to participate in professional organizations, attend conferences, and stay informed about recent research and legislation effecting young children with special needs.

OUR PROGRAM INFLUENCES ....

the quality of education available to young children and their families. This is accomplished through our training both pre- and in-service preschool special needs teachers who fulfill a variety of roles upon graduation. Our program's faculty similarly influences the field of early childhood special education through its activities within Wheelock College as well as through its contributions on a local, state and national level.

Since 1976, the "Teaching Young Children With Special Needs" program has prepared more than 40 men and women serving over 400 children with mild to severe special needs. Graduates are now fulfilling roles as head teachers and as home liaison staff in preschool special needs programs sponsored by public schools, collaboratives, mental health agencies, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, Head Start and day care centers. Several function as consultants to regular early childhood programs integrating preschoolers with special needs or as educators of school-age children with special needs. Others administer special service programs on a statewide basis or direct parent-training and in-service training demonstration projects. Our graduates can be found across the United States, in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Louisiana, Texas, California, and Oregon.

October, February, May

OUR PROGRAM EVALUATES ....

resources, processes, and outcomes. An Evaluation Design (e.g., the following excerpt) organizes the program's evaluation questions into four categories: student competencies, graduates' performance and attitudes, program's use of resources in terms of the program's functioning, courses the internship, staff and materials, and the program's impact on the community. An Evaluation Workplan further delineates how each question will be answered in terms of instrumentation, sample, procedures, data analysis and timeline.

EXCERPT FROM EVALUATION DESIGN

Evaluation Questions	Design Referent	Information Need	Information Source	Date Information Needed
Student Competencies				
How well do applicants meet entry level criteria?	4.3 input	A complementary match between program's objectives and applicants' backgrounds, interests, goals, and abilities is necessary for effective teacher-training.	Admissions Committee review of application materials, interview, writing sample Student Profile	February - May June
What are student and program expectations regarding knowledge and skill competencies to be attained?	1.0 2.0 3.0 process	Developing an individualized study plan depends upon an ongoing assessment of objectives, enabling activities, and evaluation procedures and criteria.	Matrix of Growth	September, February, May
Does student performance in core and elective courses meet course standards?	1.0 2.0 process, output	Competency-based program must gather evidence of satisfactory student performance relative to stated faculty criteria.	Papers, presentations, participation, demonstrations Faculty's descriptive evaluation of student	During courses (15-week semesters) End of each semester
To what extent does student performance conform to minimum adequacy levels of each competency area?	1.0 2.0 3.0 6.0 process, output	Information is sought on the match between students' observed behavior and stated description of own behavior, students' perception of the effectiveness of their teaching strategies, the extent to which students are successfully performing skills -- to enable students to assess present performance and plan next steps to reach future goals.		
Specifically, 1. What ratings do interns receive per competency (by self, CT, supervisor)?			Intern Rating Scale and Criteria Sheets	C

OUR PROGRAM REACHES OUT TO INTERNSHIP SITES ....

As master teachers, cooperating teachers play a major role in shaping the kind of training interns receive. As the interns' mentors, cooperating teachers may serve as supportive listeners, resources and guides; or they may serve as instructors, models or evaluators. Open relationships in which interns and cooperating teachers engaged in mutual learning appear to be the most satisfying.

Cooperating teachers are expected to:

1. help interns become acclimated to the site by providing some time to observe in the classroom, to become familiar with record-keeping duties and to meet staff and specialists;
2. delegate responsibilities so interns develop required competencies;
3. provide opportunities for daily and/or weekly discussion;
4. solicit interns' ideas for curriculum planning;
5. observe interns' performance and offer constructive criticism and practical suggestions;
6. alert interns to community resources; and,
7. meet jointly with intern and supervisor and complete evaluation forms.

To both support and reward cooperating teachers, an array of services are made available to them.

1. Cooperating teachers may use the college library. Books, journals and videotapes about early childhood special education are available.
2. Each cooperating teacher who works with an intern receives one voucher for each semester an intern is placed in his/her class.
3. Informal consultant services are available to teachers and sites working with the program upon request to the college supervisor or Coordinator.

Consultation activities have included:

a. a videotape demonstration for parents;

b. several lectures for Title XX courses being taught by cooperating teachers;

c. demonstrations of teaching strategies with site children;

d. consultation about individual children;

e. collaborating at site staff meetings on program issues, and on child placement and evaluation;

f. and designing space in a classroom for multi-handicapped youngsters.

4. To provide opportunities for cooperating teachers to feel renewed, several combined social-educational evenings are scheduled annually for the cooperating teachers, students, and faculty. These mini-workshops draw upon the talents of those present. Songs might be shared, favorite stories read, puppetry demonstrated, language kits shown, case studies presented, floor plans drawn, films analyzed, instructional materials made, panel and small group discussions held.

Mini-Workshops that have been held include:

Fund-Raising: How To Begin

Working With Families Experiencing Life Crisis

Exploring Play and Toys As Learning Tools

Facilitating Language Development in Preschoolers With Special Needs

5. Cooperating teachers may attend sessions of the "Multidisciplinary Approach to Children With Special Needs" course.

6. Based on the results of earlier Needs Assessment Surveys, the following activities have already been undertaken:

- a cooperating teachers' rotating support group
- a cooperating teachers' guidebook
- an inter-site newsletter published twice yearly
- on-the-job workshops
- College seminars, conferences, and institutes

Needs assessments are conducted each year to plan meaningful activities.

7. Interns are encouraged to select course projects that address the needs of their sites, as perceived by their cooperating teachers, and to share their projects with site staff.

8. Cooperating teachers are annually surveyed to identify their own talents which they might share as guest speakers, Advisory Group members, or panel presenters.

9. Exploratory Day Resource Folders are available for information to facilitate child placements.

10. Sites are included in the Continuing Education and Graduate School's mailing list.

OUR PROGRAM SHARES ITS EXPERTISE ....

through four types of dissemination activities and materials.

Exchange

The program exchanges information with personnel preparation programs through its distribution of the program's written products, through its faculty's participation in state special education manpower planning meetings, and through its sponsoring of guest visitors, consultants, and conferences such as the 1980 Media Festival and the 1980 and 1981 intercollegiate conferences on personnel preparation in early childhood special education. Within the College, the program coordinator maintains a centrally-located special education bulletin board and special education faculty members meet on a regular basis. Annual meetings of the program's Advisory Group, which represents interns, graduates, employers, site directors, cooperating teachers, parents, state department of education staff, and faculty, is another forum for the exchange of information and development of new directions.

Awareness

The program imparts awareness of its training model through several channels. Program publicity, as an aspect of recruitment, includes periodic, "targetted" mailings of fliers and catalogues, visits and presentations at undergraduate colleges, coverage in interns' and alumnaes' hometown newspapers, alumnae who post program brochures in other employment settings, advertisements in local and national professional journals, and participation in the Graduate School's Spring Open House.

Submission of program documents to information clearinghouses (e.g., the Evaluation Training Consortium Project, Discrepancy Evaluation Model at the University of Virginia, C. E. C.'s Early Childhood Training Institute 1977 manual, the University of New Mexico's Teacher Education/Special Education Dissemination Project, the E. R. I. C. Clearinghouse on Early Childhood) has also increased awareness of the program's design. Locally, the Massachusetts Special Education Manpower Project and the Early Childhood Project receive copies of the program's B. E. H. proposal and newsletters, respectively.

Knowledge

Through presentations and publications, program faculty, interns, and graduates have added to our knowledge both about young children with special needs and about teacher-training. Faculty have led workshops or seminars at local, national, and international conferences on such topics entitled:

"Mainstreaming - Is It Working?"

"Preparing for Parent Involvement: Communication Skills for Teachers of Young Children With Special Needs"

"A Multidisciplinary Approach To Teaching Preschool Children with Special Needs: The Teacher as Communicator and Collaborator"

"Early Childhood and Special Education Working Together"

"The Education of Preschool Children With Special Needs: How the Public, Teachers, and Children Take Responsibility"

"Supervision and Evaluation in A Competency-Based, Year-Long Internship for Teachers of Preschoolers With Special Needs"

"Behavior Management - Practical Points"

"Communication With Children: Verbal and Non-Verbal Messages"

"Classroom Climate: Positive Approaches To Child Behavior"

"Clumsiness: A Syndrome Divisible by Three"

"Movement Analysis"

"The Supervision Process"

Skill

Replication or adaptation of the program's basic components is facilitated by its print and audio-visual materials. These include:

- Needs Assessment Survey Report
- Course Syllabi Packets
- Program Overview Report
- Intern Rating Scale and Criteria Sheets
- Matrix of Growth Instrument
- Weekly Time Record Instrument
- Parent Interview Schedule
- Site Orientation Profile Form
- Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaires, Including Employer Survey and Long-Term Follow-Up
- Summer Orientation Agenda
- End-Of-Year Program Review Questionnaire
- Sample Mini-Grant Projects and Guidelines for Mini-Grant Proposals
- Sample Curriculum Projects and Curriculum Project Phase Sheet and Work Plan
- Exploratory Day Resource Files
- Sample Videotapes (of interns' teaching)
- Selected Audio Tapes of Guest Speakers
- Guidelines for Cooperating Teachers: A Booklet
- Guidelines for Videotaping As a Supervision Tool: A Booklet
- Individual and Group Supervision Booklets
- Slidetape, "Teaching Young Children With Special Needs: The Internship Experience" and Script
- Newsletters, Volumes 1, 2, 3
- Media Festival Report, List of Audio-Visual Distributors, Annotated Media Card File

- Evaluation Design and Workplan
- A Framework For Analyzing a Multidisciplinary Approach Chart
- Parent-Teacher Perceptions, Real and Ideal
- Guidelines for Non-Participant Observers and for Planning Systematic Observations
- Guidelines for Designing Lesson Plans and Samples of Interns' Lesson Plans

OUR GRADUATES VALUE ....

the learning experience our program offers. The interns' own words best communicate their thoughts and feelings. Many have commented on how their competence as teachers of young children, not just those with special needs, was affected.

> I have learned how to work with a new population of children with whom I was previously unfamiliar. I feel that the special techniques I've learned for teaching special needs children would be extremely useful if I were to return to teaching normal children - i.e. I am a better teacher as a result of this program. I have more insights into growth and development of children and adults. I feel capable at this point of combining my past career in elementary education with what I have learned here.

Another described how the "lessons" learned by being an intern in the program would generalize to a variety of situations in the future.

> I am increasingly aware of the special perspectives that I can bring, as a long-time parent and one trained to work with "normal" children,to a preschool special education program.
>
> The Wheelock Graduate program has not only updated and enlarged my theoretical understanding and taught valuable decision-making skills for using all that information, but has set a memorable model for a teaching approach. At all stages of the program, I felt accepted and encouraged in my efforts. My successes were praised in detail, my weaknesses guided or corrected with tact, sensitivity, and subtlety. I just hope I can convey that kind of respect and acceptance to my young students.

Others have discovered that their definitions of and feelings towards people with disabilities and their families were altered:

> Working with children with physical disabilities has led me to revise my ideas about what "retarded" means, as I have worked with children with apparently normal intelligence who are retarded in parts of their development and apparently "retarded" children who are able to function quite well, although slightly below age-level.
>
> I have lots of respect for parents of children with special needs; I see them as families that happen to have a handicapped child born to them. I know more about the problems they face and the individual ways they cope.

Finally, interns have commented on how their sense of themselves as teachers was expanded. As one intern enthusiastically reported, "I discovered that dedication to one's work and enjoying one's work can actually occur simultaneously!"

Inquiries about our program should be directed to:

Dr. Stefi Rubin or Ms. Ruth Greenberger
Wheelock College Graduate School
200 The Riverway
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617-734-5200 x 195